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Message Text

SECRET

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47
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 AID-05

ACDA-05 OPR-01 OMB-01 /076 W
---------- 094076
R 280626Z FEB 75
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9549

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 3667

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS CB
SUBJECT: MEKONG CONVOY UPDATE

THE FOLLOWING CINCPAC 270805Z FEB 75 SENT ACTION CJCS
INFO USSAG, AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH AMEMBASSY SAIGON AND
MEDTC PHNOM PENH BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

QUOTE

S E C R E T/J4/CINCPAC SENDS
MEKONG CONVOY UPDATE (U)
A. USSAG 261330Z FEB 75 (PASEP).
1. (S) REF A PROVIDED USSAG CURRENT MILITARY ASSESSMENT OF
SITUATION FACING FUTURE MEKONG CONVOYS. ALTHOUGH ODDS NOW NOT GOOD
FOR SUCCESS OF TP-115, LONG RANGE FUTURE OF CAMBODIA RIDES ON EFFORTS
TO BRING CONVOYS UP MEKONG. WITHOUT MEKONG CONVOYS, AIRLIFT BUYS
A LITTLE TIME, BUT IS DEPENDENT ON POCHENTONG AVAILABILITY. UNLESS
KC ARE PUSHED OUT OF ROCKET RANGE OF POCHENTONG, A C-130 OR DC-8
WILL PROBABLY BE HIT WITHIN A WEEK. IF AIRFIELD CLOSED, AIRDROP
ONLY ALTERNATIVE. EXPENSE AND EQUIPMENT LIMITATION OF AIRDROP MAKE
IT VERY SHORT TERM MEASURE. AIRDROP OPERATIONS ARE LIMITED BY
AVAILABILITY OF SORTIES AND CHUTES. CURRENT BIRD AIR MAX CAPABILITY
IS 36 AIRDROP SORTIES (545 S/T) PER DAY. THIS WILL SATISFY 45 PER-
CENT OF DAILY REQUIREMENT. AT 36 SORTIE RATE IN-THEATER ADE WILL
BE EXHAUSTED IN 24 DAYS. CONUS RESOURCES ADD 19 DAYS. BUILD UP OF
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CONUS RESUPPLY NOT WITHIN INDUSTRY CAPABILITY FOR 120 DAYS.

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2. (S) SINCE MEKONG ESSENTIAL,ABANDONMENT OF MEKONG IS TANTAMOUNT TO ABANDONMENT OF COUNTRY.
ALSO, POSSIBILITY OF MEKONG CONVOY OPERATION HAS TACTICAL ADVANTAGE OF KEEPING SOME OF KC FROM PHNOM PENH. MUCH HAS BEEN DONE IN CONVOY PROTECTION DURING FEB. FOR EXAMPLE: MINESWEEPING BARGE ARRAY HAS BEEN DESIGNED AND BUILT. THIS BARGE WILL BE PUSHED AHEAD OF NEXT CONVOY BY A SCOOT TUG. TWO CONTRACTS TO FABRICATE ADDITIONAL SHIELD BARGES HAVE BEEN AWARDED AND AMPLE SHIELD BARGES NOW ON HAND. CONEX BUNKERS FOR 50 CALIBER MACHINE GUNS AND M-79 GRENADE LAUNCHERS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED ON SHIELD BARGES FOR TP-115. LOAN OF 4 MONITORS FROM VNN HAS BEEN URGENTLY REQUESTFD
.
FIVE ADDITIONAL LCM-8 ASSETS NOW BEING PROTECTED WITH BLISTERS AND FOAMED IN OKINAWA AND DUE ARRIVE VUNG TAU O/A 20 MAR.
IN VIEW OF FOREGOING AND CRITICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MEKONG LOC, MY VIEW IS THAT CONVOY SHOULD ATTEMPT TRANSIT SOONEST AFTER AGGRESSIVE EFFORT TO SUPPRESS KC AT CHOKE POINTS AND SWEEP MINEFIELDS.
3. (S) MY STAFF AND I ARE FOLLOWING SITUATION CLOSELY. CONCERNING EAGLE PULL, 96 HOUR RESPONSE TIME STILL SATISFACTORY, REVIEWING THIS DAILY.
CONCERNING LOAN OF MONITORS, CONGRESSIONAL CONSENT SHOULD BE SOUGHT NOW UNLESS THERE IS STRONG RISK OF LOSING SUPPORT FOR MORE IMPORTANT SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST.
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